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WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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Nepal end decade-long wait for World Cup return

The Rhinos defeat the United Arab Emirates by eight wickets in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia Qualifier semi-finals at the Mulpani Cricket Stadium to book their ticket to the T20 World Cup for the first time since 2014.

POST PHOTOS: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Nepal cricket team celebrate at the Mulpani Cricket Stadium in Kathmandu on Friday after defeating the United Arab Emirates to qualify for the 2024 T20 World Cup to be held in the United States and the West Indies in June next year.

DIL KUMAR ALE MAGAR
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

As the national men's cricket team goes from strength to strength, Friday proved to be another red-letter day in the annals of Nepali cricket.

On the day, Nepal ended their long wait for a return to a Cricket World Cup after they defeated the United Arab Emirates by eight wickets in the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup Asia Qualifier in Kathmandu. Thereby they also booked their ticket to the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

This will be Nepal's only second appearance at a World Cup after they first qualified in the 2014 tournament in Bangladesh.

Nervousness had surrounded the Mulpani Cricket Stadium as the Rhinos were facing a UAE side that had defeated them in the semi-finals of the Global Qualifier A in February 2022, thus missing out on the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia last year. But captain Rohit Paudel's side banished the ghosts of that winners-take-all game in Muscat.

"I am feeling very lucky and proud. We all grew up watching the 2014 T20 World Cup and now we are going to the 2024 T20 World Cup. I am really proud of the team … and at the same time the support from the crowd was excellent," said Nepal captain Rohit Paudel who was at the wicket with Aasif Sheikh when Nepal overcame a tricky chase at the packed stadium to win by eight wickets.

Paudel added he was thrilled to follow the class of 2014 World Cup qualifying team.

"They have always been our role models. They have been here to support us. We feel very lucky."

Chasing 135 for victory, Nepal lost Kushal Bhurtel for 11 to Nilansh Keshwani in the third over but opener Shiekh coupled with Gulsan Jha to build Nepal's innings before playing an unbroken 67-run stand with Paudel for the third wicket to guide Nepal to the main event which will be held in the United States and the West Indies next June.

Player of the match Shiekh smashed seven fours and a six in his unbeaten knock of 51-ball 64 for his fourth T20I half-century. Paudel was 34 not out off 20 balls, hitting two fours and as many sixes. Jha made 22 runs facing 24 deliveries.

Earlier, after opting to bat first, Muhammad Waseem gave the UAE a solid start, lashing Karan KC with sixes and fours to take his side to 29 in three overs.

But Sompal Kami struck back, taking the prized wicket of the UAE captain in the fourth ball of the fourth over, three balls after Khalid Shah was run out.

It was Kami's 50th T20I wicket. Kami is the only remaining member of the Nepal squad that made their World Cup debut in Bangladesh 10 years ago.

Vriitya Aravind scored 64 runs off 51 balls but found little support from other UAE batters, with thrifty spin bowling from allrounder Kushal Malla and Sandeep Lamichhane, limiting them to 134-9 in 20 overs.

Malla took 3-11 and Lamichhane returned the match figures of 2-14. Paudel pocketed one wicket in the only over he bowled.

Following the loss, UAE's Waseem could not hide his disappointment.

"It is a very disappointing performance from us actually. We lost the crunch game today but it is a part of the game."

"Nepal played very well today. Congratulations to Nepal."

Former national team member and captain Gyanendra Malla, who was also part of the 2014 World Cup squad, hopes Nepal will carry the momentum into the World Cup.

"I was part of the national team that qualified for the World Cup for the first time. We had expected to play in the next World Cups but that did not materialise. Now this young side has made it that far. They are young but mature in terms of cricket. I am confident that they will leave a good footprint at the World Cup as well," Malla told Kantipur television.

During the historic 2014 journey, Nepal defeated Hong Kong and Afghanistan and held firm with the bat in a loss against Bangladesh to tie on points with the hosts, but could not qualify for Super 10, the tournament's main draw.

But Nepal exited from the group stage of the ICC World T20 Qualifier for the 2016 World T20 to lose their T20I status and did not even make it to the qualifier of the 2021 T20 World Cup.

Friday's Asia region qualifier success is also a culmination of Nepal national men's cricket team's unprecedented revival that began in February last year, thanks to head coach Monty Desai who has found the missing piece of the puzzle, especially when it comes to batting.

Nepal's decision to buy in Desai in February transformed Nepal into a formidable outfit that won 11 out of their 12 one-day international matches of the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 to rise from the second-last spot to an automatic spot in the Zimbabwe ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier in March 2023, in a span of just 40 days.

Though Nepal failed to book their ticket to the 2023 ICC ODI Cricket World Cup in India, their momentum continued to 2023 ODI Asia Cup—their first ever—where they displayed a spirited performance against cricket powerhouse India.

>> Continued on page 6

Captain Rohit Paudel celebrates the winning run.

UML set to quit Koshi government as chief minister ignores its concerns

Largest party in province is miffed after he appointed ministers from Maoist and Unified Socialist parties.

BINOD GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

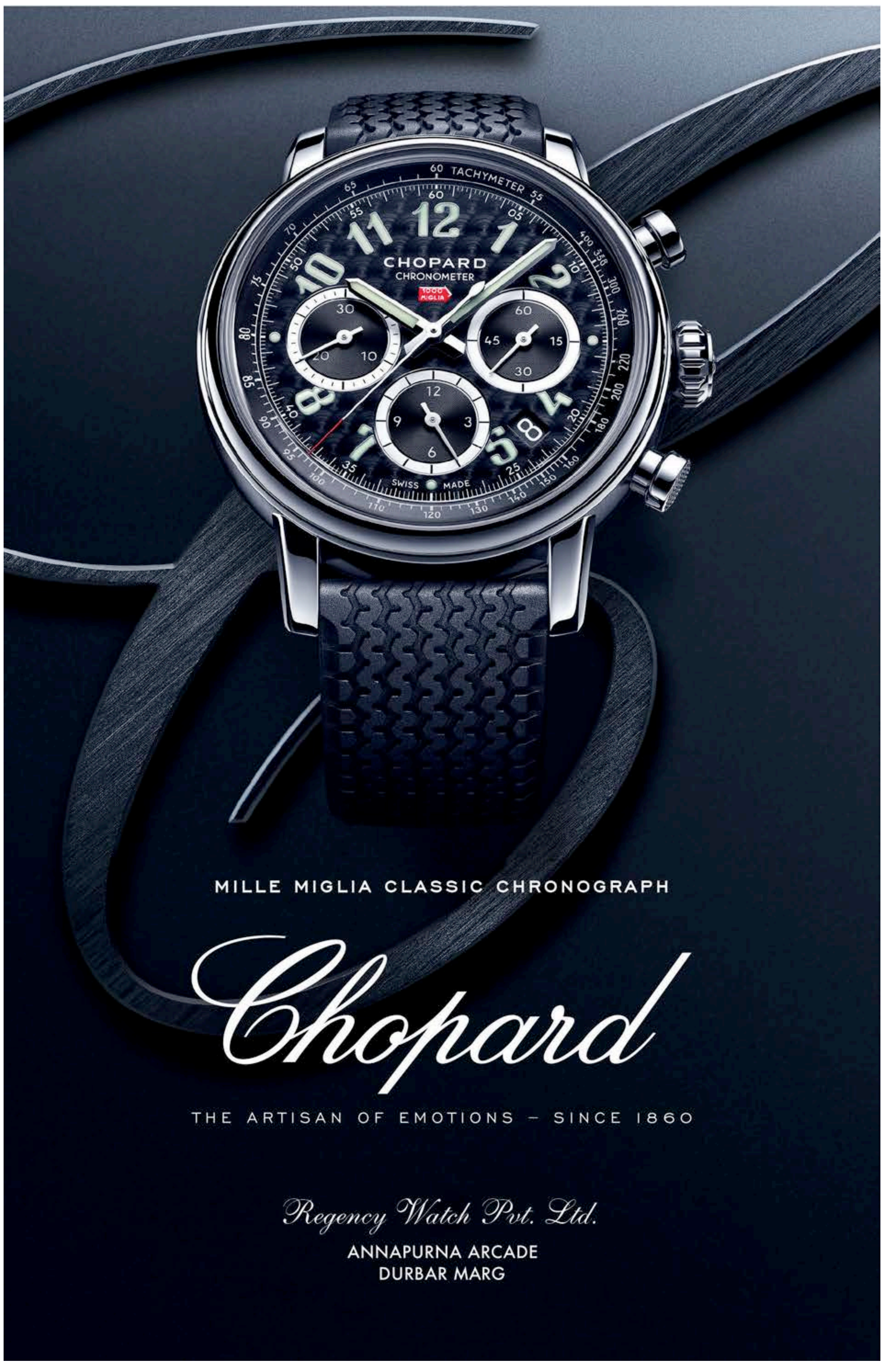
The CPN-UML is preparing to pull out of the Koshi government after Chief Minister Kedar Karki inducted ministers from the CPN (Maoist Centre) and the CPN (Unified Socialist) to expand his Cabinet, ignoring the UML's concerns.

The largest party in the Koshi provincial assembly, which had supported Karki in forming the government, was strictly against the induction of ministers from the two communist parties in the province. It wanted only the Congress and the UML in the provincial government.

"We take a serious exception to the chief minister's move. He has breached his commitment that only two parties will be in the government," Rewati Raman Bhandari, the UML's chief whip in the Koshi Provincial Assembly, told the Post. "Our party will make an official decision on Monday [to pull out from the government]." On Friday, Karki appointed ministers from the Maoist Centre and the Unified Socialist.

Karki, a provincial assembly member from the dissident faction of the Nepali Congress, became the chief minister of the Koshi Province on October 14 with the backing of the UML.

>> Continued on page 2



DISTRICT DIGEST

Tiger mauls woman to death in Bardiya

BARDIYA: A woman died after she was attacked by a tiger in Chirote community forest in ward 5 of Madhuwan Municipality in Bardiya district on Friday. According to Santosh Chaudhary, assistant forest officer of Khata Sub-Division Forest Office, a 28-year-old local woman who was cutting grass in the forest, died when she was attacked by a tiger. A total of 15 people have died in tiger attacks on the bio-corridor in the past four years. The settlement of landless people, which is near the Nepal-India border, lies along the bio-corridor through which wild animals move to and from the Bardiya National Park and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of India. Elephants in herds pass through the settlement almost every day. The forest area in the Khata bio-corridor covers around 202 square kilometres. According to the Khata Forest Coordination Committee, there are a total of 4,802 households in various settlements along the corridor. Security personnel and conservation officials urge people not to enter the forest after dusk.

Two local units in Salyan ban plastic flowers

SALYAN: Sharada Rural Municipality has banned the sale of plastic flowers in the local unit. The rural municipality took the decision to this effect on Thursday. According to Liladhar Balal, acting chief administration officer of the rural municipality, they have banned plastic flowers with the aim of reducing environmental pollution and encouraging farmers to grow flowers locally. Similarly, Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City has also banned plastic flowers in the city to reduce environmental pollution.

Fire destroys nine shops in Panchkhal

POST FILE PHOTO

KAVRE: A fire that started from the house of one Uddhav Prasad Timalsina at Samaj Kalyan Chowk in ward 4 of Panchkhal Municipality in Kavrepalanchowk district, destroyed nine shops on Friday morning. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Rajkumar Shrestha, information officer of the district police office, an electrical short circuit has been suspected as the cause of the fire. Among the nine shops, four were completely destroyed and others suffered minor damage. It took the security personnel nearly an hour to control the fire. Full details of the damage caused by the fire have yet to come, said Shrestha.

New constructions in Badimalika area by Karnali government spark environmental concerns

Local residents have been protesting the alterations and extraction of stones from local streams fearing potential damage to natural surroundings.

POST PHOTOS

This recent picture shows a pond created by damming the Triveni stream at Triveni Patan, a famous Hindu shrine in the Badimalika area, which sprawls across Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces. (Right) An under-construction Dharmashala (public resthouse) in the area. Local residents say the new projects undermine the area's natural beauty.

BASANT PRATAP SINGH
BAJHANG, NOV 3

When Bhojraj Pathak reached Triveni Patan in the last week of August to attend the Badimalika fair his heart sank. He saw the stream that flows through the grassland area at an altitude of 3,840 metres above sea level had been dammed. A concrete and cement building was also under construction near the stream. A concrete helipad was also being constructed in the lush grassland. Construction materials like cement, rods and stones are stacked nearby.

Badimalika, a highland grassland considered a revered site for Hindus, stretches between 2,000-4,200 metres above sea level covering Triveni, Badimalika and Budhinanda municipalities, and Jagannath Rural Municipality in Bajura district; Sanni Triveni Rural Municipality in Kalikot district; and Ramaroshan Rural Municipality in Achham district.

Pathak, who is the chief of the Division Forest Office in Bajura, says he was unaware of the ongoing constructions in Triveni Municipality. "I was saddened by what I saw. I wondered who was behind all these changes in the grassland area," said Pathak. "When I found out the construction was Karnali provincial government's undertaking, I was surprised."

Triveni Patan is a forest area that falls under the jurisdiction of the Division Forest Office in Bajura in Sudurpaschim province. According to Pathak, neither Bajura's forest office nor other agencies concerned were kept in loop while planning or executing the construction work. Pathak was shocked to know that the Karnali government had constructed such physical infrastructure without conducting the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). He believes the authorities responsible for ensuring the implementation of the existing legal provisions themselves violated the legal provisions.

"I never thought such massive structures could be built without first conducting the EIA," said Pathak. "The law enforcement body responsible for the implementation of the Environment Protection Act (2019) itself has been found violating the legal provision."

The Karnali Province government started the construction of physical infrastructure inside the highland grassland area last fiscal year under the budget header—Triveni, Badimalika Tourism Master Plan Construction and Implementation. The construction of a 10-room Dharmashala with three meeting halls, a seven-room building with concrete structures on the ground floor and UPVC truss on the upper floors; two toilets, 108 metallic taps, a helipad and a welcome gate is underway as per the master plan. Karnali's provincial Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment awarded the contract to Surkhet-based Majdoor Construction Pvt Ltd for the construction of the structures at a cost of Rs57.8 million.

Under the master plan, the local stream has been dammed in the Triveni Patan area. According to the Division Forest Office in Kalikot, which has been authorised to implement the project, a 4.6 metres tall concrete wall has been erected to dam the stream. However, there are no clear explanations for the need to obstruct the stream's natural flow and install metal taps that alter the very character of the Triveni areas and build a concrete helipad in the vast lush grassland.

The locals in the area have been protesting the construction of the concrete structures and the extraction of stones and pebbles required for the constructions from the local streams and rivers. They are opposed to the extraction of riverbed materials for the construction of the physical infrastructures fearing they will jeopardise the topographical structure of the area, biodiversity and exploit the natural surroundings.

> A Badimalika priest says the work should stop and new structures should be demolished.

Netra Raj Padhyay, a priest of the Badimalika temple, says that the haphazard construction of the structures threatens to exploit the natural, religious, mythological and cultural significance of the Badimalika region. "Every stone has its own importance here (Badimalika). Obstructing the natural flow of the stream will affect the environment," said Padhyay. "The construction work must be stopped immediately and the under-construction structures must be demolished."

A grand fair is organised in the Badimalika shrine every year on Janai Purnima, a Hindu festival that generally falls in the month of August. Visitors from not only Nepal but also India come here with the belief that one's wishes will be fulfilled if they visit the shrine.

Badimalika is not just an important religious and cultural heritage of the Sudurpaschim Province. This area is also important and sensitive from the biodiversity viewpoint. However, there is an increasing risk of extinction of the precious herbs and flowers and the fauna that thrive here.

The fresh construction of structures in the Triveni Patan area has also raised questions regarding political jurisdiction between Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces. Amar Khadka, mayor of Badimalika Municipality in Bajura, termed the Karnali government's move to construct physical infrastructure in the territory of Sudurpaschim province as 'unfortunate.

"It is a misfortune. This area has the potential to be listed on the UNESCO heritage list if preserved well,' said Khadka. "We are amazed to see how this happened. There has been no communication from the Karnali government to the Sudurpaschim government regarding the construction, and if such a correspondence has occurred at a higher level, we have not been informed."

According to Khadka, the Sudurpaschim Chief Minister's office has drawn the attention of the Karnali Chief Minister about the ongoing constructions in the Badimalika region. "We have been taking initiatives to dismantle the structures once we have the clearance from the higher authorities," Khadka added.

As per Schedule 1 of Environment Protection Regulations 2020, the Initial Environment Examination should be conducted to construct any tourism infrastructures costing between Rs20 million and Rs50 million. Similarly, Schedule 2 of the same regulations state that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be conducted to construct tourism infrastructures with an investment of more than Rs50 million.

Ramesh Giri, chief at the Division Forest Office in Kalikot in Karnali province, said the contract was awarded to the construction company after preparing a detailed project report. "However, the EIA of the project has not been conducted. I cannot comment about it as the construction work was already underway when I was transferred to this station," said Giri. "The correct authority to ask these questions is the Karnali provincial government."

When asked, planning officer Anju Chaudhary at the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment said that the amount was sent to the Division Forest Office in Kalikot and the division office was responsible for conducting the EIA.

Jitendra Mahat, the then chief at the Kalikot's division office (who is now in the Division Forest Office in Salyan) admitted that the contract was signed in haste without conducting the EIA. "The contract process was quite long. The contract was signed hastily. Then I was transferred from Kalikot," said Mahat. "We did it with good faith for the development of the Badimalika region," said Mahat. He, however, could not answer why the contract was signed by violating the legal provisions.

UML set to exit Koshi Cabinet over chief minister's snub

>> Continued from page 1

He took the oath the next day, and inducted two ministers without portfolio—Ram Bahadur Rana Magar of the UML and Shamser Rai from his faction of the Congress.

Though his Congress party supported Indra Bahadur Angbo of the Maoist Centre in his chief ministerial bid, eight provincial assembly members from the Congress in the country's eastern province had decided to form a government led by Karki, with UML's support, opposing the party's official decision.

While 21 members from the party supported Angbo as per the decision of the Congress top brass, eight close to dissident Congress leader Shekhar Koirala refused to oblige. Karki became chief minister with support from 39 lawmakers from the UML in the 93-strong provincial assembly.

"We have failed to understand why Karki is so desperate to induct ministers from the parties that rejected him in his chief ministerial race," said Bhandari. Karki, however, has been arguing that he wants to form a consensus government by inducting ministers from the parties that are in a coalition in the federal government.

The Maoist Centre, the Congress, the Unified Socialist and the Janata Samajbadi Party, among others, are coalition partners at the federal level. Karki was under pressure from his party leadership to form a coalition of the same parties in the province as well.

With 40 seats, the UML is the largest party in the assembly. The Congress has 29 seats, the CPN (Maoist Centre) 12, the RPP six, the CPN (Unified Socialist) four, and the Janata Samajbadi Party has one seat.

A minister in the Karki cabinet said it was former chief minister Hikmat Karki, of the UML, who advocated strongly for a consensus government while he was leading the government.

"He [Hikmat Karki] tried to form a consensus government, but couldn't. We are now materialising his dream. The UML should actually be thanking us rather than criticising," minister Rai told the Post.

Karki was appointed chief minister as per Article 168(5) of the constitution after he laid claim to lead a new government by producing signatures of 47 lawmakers, which is a majority in the 93-member provincial assembly, before the province head. Withdrawal of the UML's support can push the government into minority. Karki will have to go for a floor test again if the UML opts out, as per the constitution.

Article 188 (2) of the constitution says in case the political party which the chief minister represents is divided or a political party in coalition provincial government withdraws its support, the chief minister shall table a motion in the Provincial Assembly for a vote of confidence within 30 days.

As Karki's ruling coalition was formed using the last constitutional resort, his failure to secure the provincial assembly's confidence would mean the province is bound for a snap election. As per Article 168 (7) of the constitution, if the chief minister appointed as per Article 168 (5) fails to secure a vote of confidence, the head of the province, on the recommendation of the chief minister, will dissolve the provincial assembly and fix a date for an election to be held sometime in the next six months.

Rai, the minister, said he doesn't believe that UML will take any steps that will lead to a snap poll. "The UML, on several occasions, has reiterated that it is against mid-term elections. I don't, therefore, think it will take an exit from the government," he further said. "Even if it pulls out from the government, it will not withdraw its support, which could lead to a snap election."

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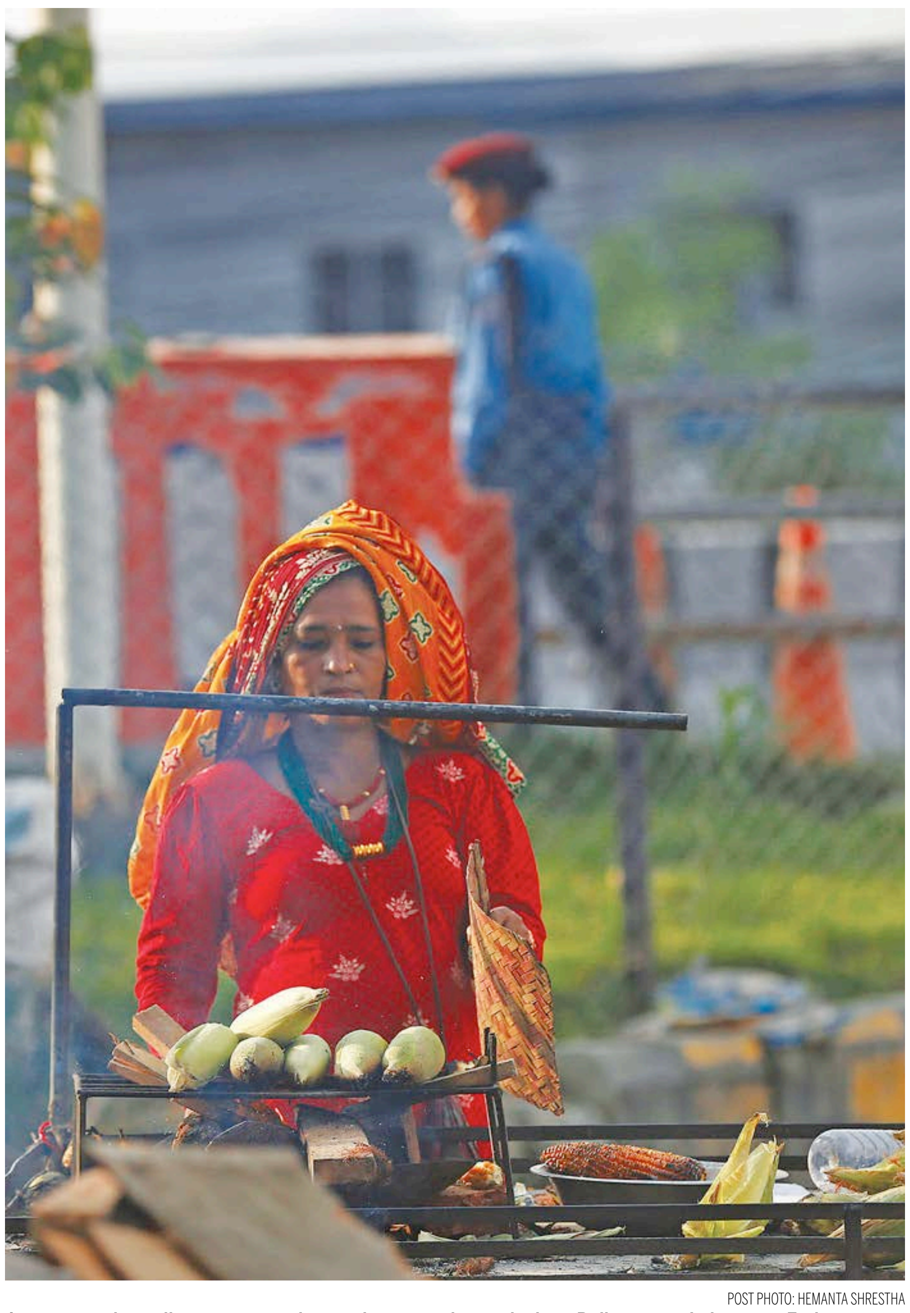
ठेगाना: नेपाल



POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

A street vendor grills corn ears on her push cart on the roadside at Balkumari in Lalitpur on Friday.

THE KATHMANDU POST

President Paudel to visit France, Germany and Italy

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

President Ramchandra Paudel is set to visit France, Germany and Italy from November 8 to 17. This is his first official visit after assuming the top office in March. A Cabinet meeting on Thursday approved the visit, officials said.

He will attend the Paris Peace Forum 2023 to be held in the French capital on November 10 and 11. Paudel will attend the function related to climate change, Suresh Chalise, the principal secretary to the President, told the Post. "He will meet several visiting dignitaries there and will hold talks with French President Emmanuel Macron."

After completing his engagements in Paris, the President will leave for Germany, where he will have talks with his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

In Italy too, the President will meet with his counterpart, Sergio Mattarella.

"We have yet to finalise other details of his programme," said Chalise.

POST PHOTO: MANOJ PAUDEL

Lumbini Development Trust Chairman Lharkyal Lama (right) hands over the peace torch to record-holding climber Kaji Shrepa in Lumbini on Friday. On the occasion of Nepal Mountaineering Association's 50th anniversary, Sherpa will take the peace torch to Kalapatthar in the Everest base area to highlight the effects of climate change.

Nepal Army, US Army Pacific to co-host disaster response exercise

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

As many as 270 disaster response professionals from various countries will attend a disaster response exercise in Nepal from November 6 to 10.

The event, co-hosted by the Nepal Army and the United States Army Pacific, will be attended by 210 people from Nepal's government and non-government agencies involved in disaster management, 44 from USARPAC and 16 others from India, the Maldives, Mongolia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Expert academic discussions and tabletop sessions of the training exercise are planned to be held at Hotel Marriott in Kathmandu, and field training exercises in Chitwan, the Nepal Army Directorate of Public Relations and Information said in a statement on Friday.

The training exercises have been conducted since 2011 to enhance disaster response through the sharing of experiences in disaster management and humanitarian assistance, according to the statement.

This type of joint exercise will help in developing cooperation, goodwill and coordination between countries and various agencies, the army stated.

World Bank, ADB moving closer to funding two major hydel projects in east Nepal

Nepali ministers and top officials from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank visited the project site of Upper Arun Hydroelectric Project on Friday.

POST PHOTO: DIPENDRA SHAKYA

A team involving finance and energy ministers visits the Upper Arun site in Sankhuwasabha.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

Nepal's two major development partners—World Bank and the Asian Development Bank—have taken leadership to finance two major hydropower projects to be developed in eastern Nepal.

The World Bank (WB) is looking to lead the international financial institutions to finance the proposed 1,061MW Upper Arun Hydroelectric Project at Bhotekhola, Sankhuwasabha.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on the other hand, is taking charge of bringing together international financiers to inject external funding to develop the 635MW Dudhkoshi storage-type project.

On Friday, top officials of the two banks visited the site of the proposed 1,061MW Upper Arun Hydroelectric Project at Bhotekhola, Sankhuwasabha.

Anna Bjerde, World Bank managing director for operations and Ramesh Subramaniam, director general of the ADB for Southeast Asia Department, reached the project site along with Finance Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat, Energy Minister Shakti Bahadur Basnet and other government officials, according to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

The World Bank, which is aiming to return to the Arun River after a gap of 28 years, is leading the consortium of international financiers to develop the project whose estimated cost is $1.75 billion. In 1995, the World Bank had pulled out from the Arun 3 hydropower project after a controversy over its viability.

According to the NEA press statement, the international financiers are expected to contribute as much as $750 million including $500 million from the World Bank itself while domestic financers led by Hydroelectricity Investment and Development Company Limited (HIDCL), a government entity, are expected to inject as much as $400 million.

On the other hand, a team consisting of ADB's Subramaniam, director general of the ADB for Southeast Asia Department, and its country director for Nepal Arnaud Cauchois, and Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Kul Man Ghising visited the project site in Khotang on Wednesday.

According to the NEA, the ADB is expected to bring together international financiers to contribute as much as $1 billion with its own funding of as much as $550 million. The project's estimated cost is $2.2 billion.

On Friday, ADB's Subramaniam joined Anna Bjerde to visit the project site of Upper Arun Hydroelectric Project. These two major development partners of Nepal have come together to inject funding to develop hydroelectric projects in Nepal at a time when the world is moving towards producing clean energy from fossil-fuel-fired power. Some of the key development partners including the WB and the ADB have agreed to help Nepal for its Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID).

> NEA aims to conclude financial closure of the project by June 2024 and start civil works in mid-2025.

On Thursday, a joint communique to operationalise Nepal's GRID Strategic Action Plan was endorsed at a high-level event organised by the finance ministry with support from the World Bank and other development partners.

The external financing for the GRID Strategic Action Plan includes grants and other concessional financing such as subsidised loans, and innovative financing such as carbon finance.

"The visit by senior World Bank officials to the project site of Upper Arun shows that the World Bank's interest to finance this mega project is real," said Hitendra Dev Shakya, former managing director of the NEA. "Not only in Nepal, the World Bank has begun financing hydropower projects worldwide in recent years amid a world transition towards clean energy."

Hydropower is one of the key sources of clean energy. Amid threats of global warming and climate change, the world is moving towards clean energy from fossil fuel-based industries.

In the press statement, the NEA quoted Bjerde as saying at the project site that the Nepal government and the World Bank have been discussing the project and that the plant was important for domestic consumption as well as for export.

"The hydropower project and the associated road can improve lives and enhance Nepal's role as producer of green energy," Bjerde wrote on X.

According to the Finance Minister Mahat, the World Bank has shown interest to finance the project and it has also made efforts to bring together other international financiers. "During the bilateral meeting, we have insisted on receiving grant and concessional loans," he said.

When Finance Minister Mahat held a meeting with the World Bank officials in Morocco in mid-October, he had sought as much as $1 billion from the international financiers led by the World Bank. The project to be implemented under a 70:30 debt-to-equity ratio and the NEA and the general public shares will have a stake in the company—Upper Arun Hydroelectric Company.

According to the NEA, there is a plan to conclude financial closure of this project by June 2024 and start construction from mid-2025 with the aim of completing the project by 2031.

When it comes to Dudhkoshi, there is a target of concluding financial closure by the end of 2024, according to the NEA. Financial closure means ensuring financial resources to develop the project.

Upper Arun is the first NEA-led hydropower project the World Bank is prepared to fund. In 2014, the global lending agency approved $84.6 million to finance the Kabeli-A Hydroelectric Project developed by the private sector. In 2019, its private sector arm— the International Finance Corporation (IFC)—had led international creditors to invest $453 million in the 216MW Upper Trishuli 1 Hydropower Project. A South Korean consortium is developing this project. The World Bank has been helping Nepal build transmission line projects.

Nepal faced long hours of power outages for years after 2008. Experts point to the bank's exit from the Arun III project in August 1995 as the main reason behind several years of load-shedding in the country. The outages officially ended only after 10 years, in May 2018.

On August 1, 1995, then World Bank President James Wolfensohn cancelled the Arun III project "in agreement with the government of Nepal" citing concerns regarding Nepal's management capability to meet the demands and long list of actions which the project of this size and complexity would involve; difficulty gaining support to implementing a number of measures including power tariff, and difficulty mobilising an additional $30-40 million cost overrun in case of project delays. SJVN Limited, India's state-owned company, is now developing the Arun III project.

"The return of the World Bank and other international financiers for big projects like Upper Arun is welcome development," said Shakya. "But Nepal also should have contingency plans to develop such a project as the risk of them abandoning the project mid-way cannot be ruled out as we experienced in some transmission line projects."

South Korean military detects signs of North Korea supplying ballistic missiles to Russia

Evidence of North Korea's weapon supplies to Russia first emerged around mid-2022, but significantly intensified just ahead of regime leader Kim Jong-un's visit to Russia.

JI DA-GYUM
SEOUL, NOV 3

The South Korean military on Thursday said it had detected indications that North Korea has delivered short-range ballistic missiles, in addition to artillery shells and rockets, to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The South Korean military disclosed—holding a closed-door briefing on arms trade and military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang—that North Korea is suspected of supplying a variety of weapons and equipment to Russia, marking the first such instance since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022.

South Korea has identified signs of North Korea's supply of short-range ballistic missiles to Russia based on information "from various sources," one senior military official said on condition of anonymity when asked by The Korea Herald whether Seoul has evidence of such transfers.

North Korea appears to still be supplying Russia with SRBMs, according to the official.

"We are monitoring the potential transportation of short-range ballistic missiles by both train and aircraft, as this mode of transportation is deemed feasible," the official noted, adding, "We are closely watching the situation, and we are currently detecting emerging signs."

The official explained that North Korea would face logistical challenges in transporting SRBMs by ships due to the dimensions of the shipping containers bound for Russia, which are approximately 6 meters in length and 2.5 to 2.6 meters in width.

For comparison, the KN-23 SRBM can measure 7.5 meters in length, according to the database provided by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

The South Korean military assesses that North Korea might seek to transport a trio of newly developed SRBMs to Russia. These missiles include the KN-23, the KN-24 and the "super-large calibre" multiple-rocket launcher known as the KN-25, which South Korea categorises as a ballistic missile system.

The military additionally indicated that North Korea is presumed to have supplied 122-millimetre shells suitable for multiple rocket launchers, along with 152 mm artillery shells that are mutually compatible with both countries.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
ANN
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

"It is estimated that around 2,000 containers have been dispatched to Russia through the Rajin Port to date," the official shared Seoul's assessment. The delivery is thought to have been initiated in August.

"Assuming these containers are loaded with 122 mm shells for multiple rocket launchers, the estimate exceeds 200,000 rounds. If these containers are loaded with 152 mm shells, the estimate surpasses 1 million rounds."

Furthermore, North Korea is suspected of having provided Russia with T-series tank ammunition, including T-55 and T-62 models.

> Pyongyang could also potentially request captured Western weapons from Russian forces in Ukraine.

The military's assessment also suggests that North Korea might potentially offer to Russia a range of other weapons, including multiple rocket launchers, field artillery, rifles, machine guns, portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles.

Evidence of North Korea's weapon supplies to Russia first emerged around mid-2022, but it significantly intensified, especially in August, just ahead of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's September visit to Russia.

In line with this pattern, containers originating from Russia have been detected not only in the vicinity of North Korea's northeastern Rajin Port, a key maritime gateway connecting Russia and North Korea but also in multiple locations across North Korea since August.

"It is worth noting that containers are emerging in nearly every region of North Korea," the unnamed official said, characterising the situation as "unusual".

"We have [seen] a notable presence of containers in proximity to North Korean ammunition facilities, indicating the possibility of a significant quantity of ammunition and related materials being transported [to Russia]."

Russian containers are also primarily found in areas adjacent to railroad tracks, often used for storage, sorting, and the loading and unloading of railroad cars.

The use of sea routes for weapons trade between Russia and North Korea has become noticeably more active since October.

In the period from August to September, it was common for a single ship to undertake a weekly voyage.

However, in October, the frequency increased, with three to four ships frequently shuttling between Russia and North Korea. A ship regularly berths at Rajin Port every three to four days.

The unnamed official explained that, on average, two of these ships typically enter the North Korean port per week.

As a reciprocal arrangement, the military believes that Russia has been providing technical guidance to North Korea concerning the third launch of what North Korea claims to be a military reconnaissance satellite. This launch was initially planned for October.

North Korea could be seeking assistance in various domains, such as Russia's support for the development of satellite technology, nuclear-related technology transfers and collaboration, aid in the realm of fighter aircraft or their components, and support for the establishment of air defence systems, according to the South Korean military.

Pyongyang could also potentially request captured Western weapons from Russian forces in Ukraine in exchange for their lethal weapons supplies, as the country might be interested in "obtaining the technical information contained within these weapons," the official explained.

The military assesses in a document that "North Korea is expected to prioritise receiving initial support in the form of food and fuel to ensure regime stability and navigate through the upcoming winter".

"Following this, both will have discussions encompassing the transfer of military technology, the modernisation of conventional military capabilities, and the organisation of joint training exercises."

– The Korea Herald

PHOTO: VIA REUTERS

An intercontinental ballistic missile is prepared for launch in this undated photo released in November last year by the North's Korean Central News Agency.

WORLD

Israel's Netanyahu rules out Gaza ceasefire as Blinken presses for more aid, civilian protection

Israeli troops tightened their encirclement of Gaza City, the focus of their campaign to crush the enclave's ruling Hamas militants.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KHAN YOUNIS, GAZA STRIP, NOV 3

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Israel on Friday to ensure more humanitarian aid and do more to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza or else there will be "no partners for peace." Israel warned that it was on high alert for attacks on its border with Lebanon as fears grew that the conflict could widen.

Israeli troops tightened their encirclement of Gaza City, the focus of their campaign to crush the enclave's ruling Hamas militants, who launched a brutal attack on Israeli communities that started the war.

But ever since that October 7 assault, there have been concerns the conflict could ignite fighting on other fronts, and Israel and the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah have repeatedly traded fire along the Lebanon border.

In his first public speech since the war began, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said his group had "entered the battle" with the past weeks' unprecedented cross-border fighting. "We will not be limited to this," he said, suggesting escalation was possible. Still, Nasrallah stopped short of announcing that Hezbollah is fully engaging in the war.

Blinken, on his third trip to Israel since the war began, reiterated U.S. support for Israel in the war, saying it has the right to defend itself. But he said a "humanitarian pause" was needed to boost aid deliveries to Palestinian civilians amid growing alarm over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

After meeting Blinken, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel "refuses a temporary ceasefire that doesn't include a return of our hostages," referring to some 240 people Hamas abducted during its attack. He said Israel was pressing ahead with its military offensive with "all of its power."

Blinken said there had to be a substantial and immediate increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza, where "we need to do more to protect Palestinian civilians." Without that, "there are no partners for peace," he said, adding that it was critical to restore the path toward a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

AFP/RSS

People gathered in a cafe watch the televised speech of Lebanon's Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah, in the Tariq Al-Jadida neighbourhood of Beirut on Friday. Nasrallah on the day spoke for the first time since war broke out between Hamas and Israel on October 7.

Hezbollah, an ally of Hamas, attacked Israeli military positions in northern Israel with drones, mortar fire and suicide drones on Thursday. The Israeli military said it retaliated with warplanes and helicopter gunships, and spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said civilians were wounded in the Hezbollah attacks.

"We are in a high state of readiness in the north, in a very high state of alert, to respond to any event today and in coming days," he said.

Blinken said the US, which has deployed aircraft carriers and other forces in the eastern Mediterranean, was committed to ensuring that no "second or third front" opens in the conflict, referring to Hezbollah.

In his speech, Nasrallah said his militia is not deterred by US warnings, saying: "Your fleets in the Mediterranean ... will not scare us."

A war with Hezbollah would be devastating for both Israel and Lebanon. Hezbollah is much stronger than Hamas, with an arsenal of some 150,000 rockets and missiles, some believed to be precision-guided weapons capable of striking deep inside Israel.

Israel has promised to unleash vast destruction in Lebanon if all-out war erupts, accusing Hezbollah of hiding its military installation in the midst of residential areas. The two enemies fought an inconclusive monthlong war in 2006. Renewed fighting could also risk drawing Iran, which backs both Hamas and Hezbollah, into the conflict.

More than 9,200 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza so far, mostly women and minors, and more and than 23,000 people have been wounded, the Gaza Health Ministry said, without providing a breakdown between civilians and fighters.

More than 1,400 people have died on the Israeli side, mainly civilians killed during Hamas' initial attack, when some 240 people were also taken hostage. Some 5,400 have also been injured.

Twenty-four Israeli soldiers have been killed in Gaza since the start of the ground operation. Since the start of the war, seven Israeli soldiers and a civilian have been killed in different incidents along Israel's border with Lebanon.

As American officials have before, Blinken pledged unwavering support for Israel and its right to defend itself.

"We stand strongly for the proposition that Israel has not only the right but the obligation to defend itself, and to make sure that October 7 should never happen again," said Blinken, who also plans to visit Amman, Jordan. It follows President Joe Biden's suggestion for a humanitarian "pause" in the fighting. The aim would be to let in aid for Palestinians and let out more Palestinians who hold foreign passports and wounded.

Around 800 people left Gaza over the past two days—the first time people departed the besieged territory other than four hostages released by Hamas and another rescued by Israeli forces.

Blinken first held talks with Netanyahu behind closed doors before starting wider discussions with the leader and his War Cabinet and meeting with President Isaac Herzog.

More than 3,700 Palestinian children have been killed in 25 days of fighting, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. Bombardment has driven more than half the territory's 2.3 million people from their homes. Food, water and fuel are running low under Israel's siege, and overwhelmed hospitals warn they are on the verge of collapse.

Israel has allowed more than 260 trucks carrying food and medicine into Gaza, but aid workers say it's not nearly enough.

Israeli authorities have refused to allow fuel in, saying Hamas is hoarding fuel for military use and would steal new supplies.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the US was not advocating for a general ceasefire but a "temporary, localised" pause.

Israel has not openly responded to Biden's suggestion. But Netanyahu, who has previously ruled out a ceasefire, said Thursday: "We are advancing. … Nothing will stop us." He vowed to destroy Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip.

Israel and the US seem to have no clear plan for what would come next if Hamas rule in Gaza is brought down—a key question on Blinken's agenda during the visit, according to the State Department.

Meanwhile, military officials said Israeli forces have now completely encircled Gaza City, a densely packed cluster of neighbourhoods that Israel says is the centre of Hamas military infrastructure and includes a vast network of underground tunnels, bunkers and command centres.

Nobel-winner Gurnah: UK imperial literature was openly racist

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS, NOV 3

Nobel-winning writer Abdulrazak Gurnah says removing offensive words from the likes of Agatha Christie is "futile", but says Britain did produce openly racist literature during the last century of its empire.

The British-Tanzanian author won the 2021 Nobel Prize for books such as "Paradise" and "Memory of Departure" exploring Europe's colonial legacy.

He is also a professor of English and post-colonial literature at Britain's University of Kent.

Asked by AFP about the recent trend of publishers rewriting books by Christie, Roald Dahl and James Bond author Ian Fleming to remove racist and other possibly offensive words, Gurnah was ambivalent.

"Certainly as a scholar, I think it's a futile thing to do," he said.

"I suppose one of the reasons why they're doing it is that the publisher wants to make their product more respectable."

He said, "I think there are bigger issues in the world to worry about."

While the current culture wars focus on tweaks to celebrity writers and hysteria over "cancel culture", Gurnah is more interested in the much more extreme racism that appeared in British literature when its empire was under threat.

"There is a certain period during imperialism when the language used to describe the colonised became harsher and harsher," he said.

He cited a study linking this shift to the mutiny in India in 1857, an uprising that showed Britain it was unwanted and vulnerable, and which sparked a brutal crackdown on dissent.

"There's a kind of out-of-control rage with which the British responded," Gurnah said.

"This is also a turning point in the way the language changes... There is a period from the early and mid-19th century, right through the middle of the 20th century, when there was no self-consciousness about being racist, and using racist language," he added.

Gurnah's response has not been to call for revisions to the past—though he admits it can be "very hard" to read the racist literature of this period.

Russia's drone strike hits Ukrainian infrastructure

REUTERS
KYIV, NOV 3

Russia launched a massive drone attack early on Friday, hitting critical infrastructure in the west and south of Ukraine and destroying private houses and commercial buildings in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, officials said.

The air force said it shot down 24 "Shahed" drones out of 40 launched by Russia, the biggest drone attack in weeks to target Kharkiv in the northeast, Odesa and Kherson in the south and the region of Lviv on Ukraine's border with Poland in the west.

One X-59 missile was also shot down, the air force said.

"We realise that as winter approaches, Russian terrorists will try to do more damage. We will respond to the enemy," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said of the attack, adding that air defences had been active in 10 different regions.

Officials say Ukraine is bracing for a second winter of Russian air strikes on the energy system, which they warn is more vulnerable than it was last year as it has less excess capacity and little in the way of spare equipment.

The air force said the latest drones were launched in several waves and flew to different regions in small groups. Air alerts in some regions lasted for several hours during the night.

Maksym Kozytskiy, Lviv's governor, said an infrastructure facility had been hit five times during the attacks on his region, but did not elaborate on the damage. He reported no casualties.

Poll shows most US adults think AI will add to election misinformation in 2024

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK, NOV 3

The warnings have grown louder and more urgent as 2024 approaches: The rapid advance of artificial intelligence tools threatens to amplify misinformation in next year's presidential election at a scale never seen before.

Most adults in the US feel the same way, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy.

The poll found that nearly 6 in 10 adults (58 percent) think AI tools—which can micro-target political audiences, mass produce persuasive messages, and generate realistic fake images and videos in seconds—will increase the spread of false and misleading information during next year's elections.

By comparison, 6 percent think AI will decrease the spread of misinformation while one-third say it won't make much of a difference. "Look what happened in 2020—and that was just social media," said 66-year-old Rosa Rangel of Fort Worth, Texas.

Rangel, a Democrat who said she had seen a lot of "lies" on social media in 2020, said she thinks AI will make things even worse in 2024—like a pot "brewing over."

Just 30 percent of Americans have used AI chatbots or image generators and fewer than half (46 percent) have heard or read at least some about AI tools. Still, there's a broad consensus that candidates shouldn't be using AI.

When asked whether it would be a good or bad thing for 2024 presidential candidates to use AI in certain ways, clear majorities said it would be bad for them to create false or misleading media for political ads (83 percent), to edit or touch-up photos or videos for political ads (66 percent), to tailor political ads to individual voters (62 percent) and to answer voters' questions via chatbot (56 percent).

The sentiments are supported by majorities of Republicans and Democrats, who agree it would be a bad thing for the presidential candidates to create false images or videos (85 percent of Republicans and 90 percent of Democrats) or to answer voter

> By comparison, six percent think AI will decrease the spread of misinformation.

questions (56 percent of Republicans and 63 percent of Democrats).

The bipartisan pessimism toward candidates using AI comes after it already has been deployed in the Republican presidential primary.

In April, the Republican National Committee released an entirely AI-generated ad meant to show the future of the country if President Joe Biden is reelected. It used fake but realistic-looking photos showing boarded-up storefronts, armoured military patrols in the streets and waves of immigrants creating panic. The ad disclosed in small lettering that it was generated by AI.

Ron DeSantis, the Republican governor of Florida, also used AI in his campaign for the GOP nomination. He promoted an ad that used AI-generated images to make it look as if former President Donald Trump was hugging Dr. Anthony Fauci, an infectious disease specialist who oversaw the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Never Back Down, a super PAC supporting DeSantis, used an AI voice-cloning tool to imitate Trump's voice, making it seem like he narrated a social media post.

"I think they should be campaigning on their merits, not their ability to strike fear into the hearts of voters," said Andie Near, a 42-year-old from Holland, Michigan, who typically votes for Democrats.

She has used AI tools to retouch images in her work at a museum, but she said she thinks politicians using the technology to mislead can "deepen and worsen the effect that even conventional attack ads can cause."

College student Thomas Besgen, a Republican, also disagrees with campaigns using deepfake sounds or imagery to make it seem as if a candidate said something they never said.

"Morally, that's wrong," the 21-year-old from Connecticut said. Besgen, a mechanical engineering major at the University of Dayton in Ohio, said he is in favour of banning deepfake ads or, if that's not possible, requiring them to be labelled as AI-generated.

The Federal Election Commission is currently considering a petition urging it to regulate AI-generated deepfakes in political ads ahead of the 2024 election. While sceptical of AI's use in politics, Besgen said he is enthusiastic about its potential for the economy and society.

New Delhi blanketed by toxic haze, world's most polluted city again

AP/RSS

Smog hangs over the city skyline in New Delhi, India, Friday. Authorities shut primary schools and banned polluting vehicles and construction activity to control the worst haze and smog.

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, NOV 3

India's capital New Delhi was wrapped in a thick layer of toxic haze on Friday and some schools were ordered closed as the air quality index (AQI) plummeted to the "severe" category.

New Delhi again topped a real-time list of the world's most polluted cities compiled by Swiss group IQAir, which put the Indian capital's AQI at 640 in the "hazardous" category on Friday, followed by 335 in the Pakistani city of Lahore.

Regional officials said a seasonal combination of lower temperatures, a lack of wind and crop stubble burning in neighbouring farm states had caused a spike in air pollutants.

Many of New Delhi's 20 million residents complained of irritation in the eyes and itchy throats with the air turning a dense grey as the AQI hovered around 480 in some monitoring stations.

An AQI of 0-50 is considered good while anything between 400-500 affects healthy people and is a danger to those with existing diseases.

"In my last 24 hours duty, I saw babies coughing, children coming with distress and rapid breathing," Aheed Khan, a Delhi-based doctor, said on social media platform X.

There were fewer people in the city's parks such as Lodhi Garden and India Gate, popular with joggers.

Residents snapped up air purifiers. One service centre for the appliances said there was a shortage of new filters and fresh stocks were expected on Monday.

Officials said they saw no immediate improvement in the air quality.

"This pollution level is here to stay for the next two to three weeks, aggravated by incidents of stubble burning, slow wind speed and cooling temperatures," said Ashwani Kumar, chairman of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee.

Farmers in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh typically burn crop waste after harvesting in October to clear their fields before sowing winter crops a few weeks later.

This year, attention on the worsening air quality has cast a shadow over the cricket World Cup hosted by India, with financial capital Mumbai also suffering from a spike in pollution levels. Delhi hosts a World Cup match on Monday between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

A concentration of toxic PM2.5 particles, which are less than 2.5 microns in diameter and can cause deadly illness, was 53.4 times the World Health Organization's annual air quality guideline value in New Delhi on Friday, according to IQAir.

While junior schools in the capital were ordered shut for Friday and Saturday, they were open in the suburbs and children boarding school buses were forced to wear masks that had been put away since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Poor air quality also caused respiratory problems, irritation in the eyes and restlessness in pet animals.

"Breathing trouble can develop into pneumonia or other ailments in younger animals. If possible, avoid taking pets out on morning walks for a few days till the air improves," said Prabhat Gangwar, a veterinarian at animal welfare NGO Friendicoes.

Aussie woman faces court for alleged mushroom murders

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MORWELL, AUSTRALIA, NOV 3

An Australian woman appeared in court on Friday accused of murdering her inlaws with a toxic mushroom lunch and attempting to kill her estranged husband four times.

Erin Patterson, 49, is charged with three counts of murder for allegedly dishing up a poisonous beef Wellington that killed her parents-in-law and a third lunch guest, the wife of a local pastor.

Police have previously suggested the crusted beef fillet was laced with death cap mushrooms.

Patterson, a former newsletter editor, was taken into custody this week following a headline-grabbing, three-month investigation.

The alleged triple murder has rocked the sedate farming town of Leongatha, about two hours' drive southeast of Melbourne.

Leongatha is better known for its medieval society's re-enactments and its annual daffodil festival.

Patterson has also been charged with repeatedly trying to murder her estranged husband Simon Patterson, who was identified in police charge sheets released to the media on Friday.

Police said Simon Patterson "became ill after meals" on separate occasions in 2021 and 2022, and have charged Erin Patterson with four counts of attempted murder.

The 49-year-old was flanked by guards as she made her first appearance in Latrobe Valley Magistrates Court on Friday morning.

She wore a beige jersey and appeared composed throughout the brief administrative hearing.

Patterson will return to court in May 2024 after police secured a 20-week adjournment so that detectives have enough time to comb through computers seized from her house.

Patterson allegedly cooked the beef Wellington in late July, serving her estranged parents-in-law Don and Gail Patterson, both 70, as well as local Baptist pastor Ian Wilkinson, 69, and his wife Heather, 66.

The two couples allegedly started experiencing food poisoning symptoms later that night and, with their health rapidly deteriorating, they sought the help of doctors at local hospitals.

Don and Gail Patterson and Heather Wilkinson died in the days following the lunch while Ian Wilkinson eventually recovered after spending nearly two months in hospital.

FOREX

US Dollar	133.56
Euro	142.17
Pound Sterling	163.15
Swiss Franc	147.65
Australian Dollar	86.03
Canadian Dollar	97.16
Singapore Dollar	98.08
Japanese Yen	8.89
Chinese Yuan	18.25
Saudi Arab Riyal	35.60
Qatari Riyal	36.63
Thai Bhat	3.74
UAE Dhiram	36.36
Malaysian Ringgit	28.24
Korean Won	10.12

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

BULLION

	PRICE PER TOLA
Fine Gold	Rs 115,900
Silver	Rs 1,390

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

BIZLINE

Hotel Yak and Yeti holds Chimney Lighting Ceremony

KATHMANDU: Hotel Yak and Yeti held a Chimney Lighting Ceremony at the Chimney restaurant on Wednesday. The age-old tradition of lighting the copper chimney, which heralds the arrival of winter in Kathmandu, was continued with great enthusiasm, the hotel said in a press statement. Esteemed guests, dignitaries, and patrons came together to celebrate the event, which was a testament to the rich heritage of the restaurant. The igniting of the chimney was done by Monika Scheiblauer, general manager of Yak and Yeti. The evening was an exquisite blend of tradition, culinary artistry, and the warmth of community, the hotel said.

US hiring slows to 150,000, dragged down by auto strike

WASHINGTON: Job growth in the United States cooled in October, according to government data released Friday, in part dragged down by an auto workers strike. The world's biggest economy added 150,000 jobs last month, less than analysts expected and down from a revised 297,000 in September, the Labor Department said. The unemployment rate edged up to 3.9 percent, the report added. This is likely seen as good news for policymakers, given concerns that a too-hot labour market could keep inflation elevated. The job market has been unexpectedly resilient over the past year, even as the central bank lifted interest rates rapidly to combat inflation—a move that typically sees hiring cool and unemployment edge up. **(AFP)**

Russia shrugs off latest US sanctions

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Friday dismissed a new package of US sanctions, saying Russia had learnt to "overcome" such economic hurdles since the Ukraine conflict began. Washington on Thursday sanctioned several Russian energy and finance companies as well as individuals and firms in Turkey, China and the United Arab Emirates it said were supporting Russia's offensive against Ukraine. "Of course, sanctions create additional problems. But I will repeat once again, we have adapted to sanctions... We have learned how to overcome them," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. **(AFP)**

New Delhi allows export of 25,000 tonnes of sugar to Nepal

Market insiders, however, say Nepal will not be able to import the sweetener ahead of the Tihar festival.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

POST PHOTO: DEEPAK KC

People queue up for sugar at the Salt Trading Corporation that has rationed the sweetener to 2 kg per person, in Kalimati, Kathmandu on Friday.

New Delhi has allowed the export of 25,000 tonnes of sugar on a quota basis to Nepal till September 30 next year, as Nepal is struggling to ensure enough sweetener amid the upcoming Tihar festival.

The price of sugar which was Rs75 per kg in the retail market a few weeks before the Dashain surged to Rs130 per kg after India's export restriction.

The price has jumped to Rs160 per kg and is not easily available in the market, traders say.

However, market insiders say import may not be possible before Tihar.

India's Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution decided to allow the export of 25,000 tonnes of sugar to Nepal on Thursday. Under the government-to-government arrangement, Nepal should bring the sugar through India's National Cooperative Exports Limited.

"We received an email on Thursday evening and held a meeting on Friday. We have written to the Indian government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate the export of 20,000 tonnes of sugar," said Gajendra Kumar Thakur, joint secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

"We are making all possible efforts to import the sugar before Tihar." Tihar festival begins on November 11.

The festival of lights is celebrated with sweet treats. Sweet shops across the country are in short supply of sugar after Nepal's Finance Ministry delayed the approval to import sugar to state-owned supply agencies before the Dashain festival.

According to Thakur, they have asked the Indian government to send the consignment through Birgunj customs. "We have requested medium sugar varieties," he said. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade of India, on October 18, issued a notice that it has extended the restriction on sugar exports beyond October 31.

However, according to the notice of India's Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, a committee of ministers formed to review the price and availability of essential commodities decided to allow sugar export to Nepal and Bhutan through the National Cooperative Exports Limited. Thakur said that out of 25,000 tonnes of sugar, they plan to import 20,000 tonnes in the first phase.

The government's supply bodies—Salt Trading Corporation and Food Management and Trading Company—will import 10,000 tonnes each, respectively.

"The remaining 5,000 tonnes will be imported once the price of sugar starts declining in India," said Thakur.

The sugar imported for the festival will be exempted from customs duty, said the industry ministry.

The government levies taxes totalling 43 percent on sugar import—30 percent import duty and 13 percent VAT.

But, according to the officials, to provide relief to consumers, the government has halved the import duty for sugar.

According to the industry ministry, for the Tihar festival, the Salt Trading Corporation will be supplying 3,000 tonnes of sugar from different domestic sugar mills.

"We have started supplying 300 tonnes of sugar in the market from Friday," said Thakur.

India has been halting shipments of sugar for the first time in seven years saying that lack of rain has hit sugarcane yields. India allowed mills to export only 6.1 million tonnes of sugar until September 30, after letting them sell a record 11.1 million tonnes during the last season.

According to Nepal's Department of Commerce, Supplies and Consumer Protection, police and administration are being mobilised to distribute sugar from the mills to prevent hoarding. The department said that the administration would confiscate sugar if found hoarded in unregistered warehouses.

"The police have been inspecting all the sugar mills," said Ananda Raj Pokharel, information officer at the Commerce Department.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies had asked for permission to import 60,000 tonnes of sugar in August to meet the anticipated festival demand.

However, the Finance Ministry approved the import of 20,000 tonnes of sugar on September 13, just a month ahead of the Dashain festival.

Due to the delay in import approval and bidding process, both Salt Trading and Food Management and Trading Company were not able to bring sugar.

Subsequently, India issued a notice to sugar mills to restrict exports at the start of October, halting shipments for the first time in seven years.

India surprised buyers in July by imposing a ban on non-basmati white rice exports. New Delhi also imposed a 40 percent duty in August on exports of onions as it tries to calm food prices ahead of state elections later this year.

Nepal's annual sugar requirement is around 270,000 tonnes. The country faces a deficit of about 100,000 tonnes of the sweetener annually which is fulfilled through imports by the private sector and sometimes by the two government companies.

Bangladesh protests halt production for top fashion brands

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA, NOV 3

Levi's and H&M are among top global clothing brands to suffer production halts in Bangladesh, a garment union leader said Friday, after days of violent protests by workers demanding a near-tripling of their wages.

Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of the South Asian country's $55 billion annual exports, supplying many of the world's top names in fashion.

But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority of whom are women whose monthly wages start at 8,300 taka ($75).

Dozens of factories have been ransacked by striking workers, with several hundred others shuttered by their owners to avoid vandalism.

Among them are "many of the country's bigger factories, who make clothing for almost all major Western brands and retailers," Kalpona Akter, president of the Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF), told AFP.

"They include Gap, Walmart, H&M, Zara, Inditex, Bestseller, Levi's, Marks and Spencer, Primark and Aldi," she added.

There was no immediate confirmation from the brands Akter named of disruptions to their production in Bangladesh.

> Police say at least 300 factories have been shut down in the weeklong protests.

Manufacturers whose factories have been damaged in the protests are reluctant to give the names of brands they work with, fearing the loss of orders from buyers.

Police said at least 300 factories had been shut down in the weeklong protests, which have so far left two workers dead and dozens more injured.

Akter said her union had counted around 600 affected factories. Protests continued on Friday with thousands of garment workers mobilising on the streets of industrial neighbourhoods around the capital Dhaka.

Around 3,000 workers attempted to block their colleagues from joining a factory shift after two major manufacturers—HaMeem and Sterling groups—reopened their plants.

"Police fired tear gas to disperse the protesters," a police inspector charged with monitoring the protests, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP.

"The two companies declared a holiday for the day and their 25,000 workers went home."

Garment workers say that a sharp increase in living costs has left them struggling to provide for their families. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), which represents factory owners, has offered workers a 25 percent pay raise.

That is significantly short of the 23,000 taka ($209) monthly wage that the protest campaign has called for.

Police said manufacturers in Gazipur, Dhaka's biggest industrial hub that saw the worst of this week's violence, had decided to reopen their plants from Saturday to make up for lost shifts.

"We will deploy nearly 3,000 police and border guards to prevent any violence," Gazipur police chief Sarwar Alam told AFP.

He urged the workers to stop the violence and find a solution through dialogue.

"I think the demands of workers are logical. But taking the law into their own hands won't help their cause," Alam added.

American Chamber of Commerce in Nepal receives accreditation from US Chamber of Commerce

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

PHOTO: COURTESY OF AMCHAM NEPAL

The American Chamber of Commerce in Nepal (AmCham Nepal) has received accreditation from the US Chamber of Commerce, in a potential move to boost foreign investment in Nepal.

The US Chamber of Commerce is the largest business organisation and network in the world, with 3,000 state members, 130 members and access to almost 3 million companies and corporates worldwide.

At a function in Washington, DC, on Thursday, Atul Kashyap, senior vice-president for South Asia at the US Chamber of Commerce, presented the accreditation certificate to Ajit Shah, president of AmCham Nepal and the CEO of Lotus Holdings Nepal.

Within two years of its establishment, AmCham Nepal has become an official chapter of the US Chamber of Commerce, which is a historic achievement, according to Shah.

Shah said this accomplishment would be a milestone for attracting foreign investment to Nepal.

This event has opened the Nepali market up to global companies, AmCham Nepal said in a statement.

Shah also announced that AmCham will organise the US-Nepal Economic Summit in Nepal next year, which will be attended by the private sector of America and AmCham members around the world.

Currently, American investments are flowing into Nepal's energy, information technology, and tourism sectors.

AmCham Nepal, with almost 50 members, has created more than 15,000 direct employment opportunities and over 100,000 indirect employment opportunities in Nepal.

Foreign Minister Saud, who witnessed the handover, emphasised the need for increased US government and private sector investments in Nepal's energy sector.

American Ambassador to Nepal Dean Thompson highlighted the critical role of the private sector in driving the economy at the function.

Atul Kashyap, the senior vice-president for South Asia of the US Chamber of Commerce, acknowledged Nepal's potential in the green energy sector and emphasised the significance of investing in its success.

Sridhar Khatri, the Nepali ambassador to the US, said that the accreditation for the chamber could bring an investment of almost $1 billion in the IT sector, creating one million jobs for Nepali youth.

Shah shared AmCham Nepal's plans to focus on skills development in the IT sector and to work actively for the Double Taxation Avoidance agreement between the US and Nepal.

Italy's olive growers lament poor harvests from extreme weather

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PALOMBARA SABINA (ITALY), NOV 3

At this time of year, the trees on Alan Risolo's land in central Italy should be groaning with olives. But extreme weather blamed on climate change has ruined his harvest.

"Production has fallen by 80 percent," said the 43-year-old farmer from Sabina, north of Rome, despondently holding up a branch with only a few shrivelled green and black olives on it.

Known since Roman times for its olive groves, this region boasts trees said to be hundreds, even thousands, of years old.

But changing weather patterns are proving hugely challenging.

"For several years, our land has really suffered from climate change," Risolo told AFP, citing torrential rain contrasted with "long periods of heat lasting into the autumn".

Normally, he and his workers would be in coats for the autumn harvest, when they use electric devices to shake the trees so the fruit falls onto tarpaulins below.

Earlier this week they were collecting the olives while wearing T-shirts, as the thermostat hit 29 degrees Celsius (84 degrees Fahrenheit).

The cut in production has affected not just Sabina, but most of the central and northern regions of Italy, the world's second-largest producer of olive oil after Spain.

This year national production is estimated to be 290,000 tonnes, down from 315,000 in 2022 and the lowest figure in the last four years, according to agricultural association Coldiretti.

When harvested, Risolo's olives go to the "OP Latium" mill, where they and others from the area are washed, sorted and then crushed into a greenish paste from which the precious extra virgin oil is extracted.

The smell is glorious, and the equipment is state-of-the-art. But all the technology in the world cannot squeeze oil from olives that don't exist.

Agronomist Stefano Cifeca, who is responsible for quality control on site, confirmed this year's meagre harvest.

"Unfortunately this year climate change meant that in April and May (the flowering months)... we had heavy rainfall that washed away the pollen," hindering fertilisation and the development of olives, he said.

Faced with increasingly hot summers and long periods without rain, Unaprol, the national association of olive oil producers, is calling for a national plan to help save water.

Cifeca backs this idea at a local level, urging the creation of basins to collect water in winter that can then be reused when drought hits.

Farmers here are used to tough times. In 2018, Risolo recalls, a frost wiped out his harvest.

But he warned that agriculture faces "a more uncertain future than ever, because we cannot accurately predict these changes in the climate".

The stakes are high. Italy has 150 million olive trees representing three billion euros ($3.19 billion) in annual turnover and supporting 400,000 businesses, according to Coldiretti.

The risk is that some farmers switch to other crops, although Cifeca insists this is not yet necessary.

"Luckily the olive tree is a very robust plant that can adapt to changes in climate and different territories," he said.

Despite the poor performance in the centre and north, Italian production this year was saved by its southern regions, both Puglia—which makes half of Italy's oil—and Calabria.

Farmers have also been helped by rising prices in the global market for olive oil, as production in Spain, which normally produces half of the world's supply, has also suffered.

Production in Spain fell 34 percent compared to the average over the last four years, according to Coldiretti figures from September, due to a prolonged drought.

But the rising prices are bad news for consumers—including in Italy, which consumes 15 percent of olive oil produced worldwide.

AFP/RSS

Workers use electric rakes to harvest olives in a grove, in Palombara Sabina, in the Lazio region on October 30.

Nepal qualify for 2024 T20 World Cup

POST PHOTOS: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

(Clockwise from top) Nepal supporters during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Asia Qualifier semi-final match between Nepal and the United Arab Emirates at the Mulpani Cricket Stadium in Kathmandu on Friday. Nepal's Aasif Shiekh celebrates his half-century. Nepal head coach Monty Desai (left) embraces Kushal Malla after Nepal qualified for the 2024 T20 World Cup.

>> Continued from page 1

Nepal also reached the quarter-finals of the men's cricket competition at the Hangzhou Asian Games where they rewrote T20I cricket record books shattering multiple records including record highest men's T20I total (314-3), biggest T20I run-margin victory (273-run win), fastest men's T20I century (34-ball hundred by Kushal Malla) and fastest T20I half-century (nine-ball 50 by Dipendra Singh Airee) and most T20I sixes by a team in an innings.

"It is the result of years of hard labour of the entire cricket team," Chatur Bahadur Chand, president of the Cricket Association of Nepal, told the Post. "Their hard work has finally paid off. They have qualified for the T20 World Cup, which is itself a moment of great pride for Nepal," Chand added.

Oman also joined Nepal at the next year's global showpiece after routing Bahrain by 10 wickets at TU Cricket Ground.

Aquib Ilyas took 4-10 to restrict Bahrain to 106-9. In reply, openers Kashyap Prajapati and Pratik Athavale scored unbeaten half centuries to complete the chase with six overs to spare.

Oman will be playing their third World Cup.

Nepal will now join the world's cricket elites in the 2024 global event—the first to be expanded to 20 teams—but they still are a long way from becoming one themselves.

Eighteen teams have now qualified for the 2024 T20 World Cup. The West Indies and the US qualified as hosts. Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Netherlands, Pakistan, South Africa and Sri Lanka qualified as the top eight teams in the 2022 edition of the competition. Afghanistan and Bangladesh sealed their spots as the two next-highest-ranked teams in the format. Ireland and Scotland qualified from the Europe region qualifier, while Papua New Guinea made it from the East Asia-Pacific region and Canada from the Americas region. The final two spots at the World Cup will be decided through the Africa qualifier, which will conclude at the end of the month.

Nepal play Oman in the title match at Kirtipur on Sunday.

SCOREBOARD

SEMI-FINAL, MULPANI CRICKET STADIUM

TOSS: UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, BAT FIRST.

United Arab Emirates 134-9

Vriitya Aravind 64 (51), Muhammad Waseem 26 (16); Kushal Malla 3-0-11-3, Sandeep Lamichhane 4-1-14-2

Nepal 135-2

Aasif Sheikh 64* (51), Rohit Paudel 34* (20); Basil Hameed 2-0-18-1

Nepal win by eight wickets.

Player of the match: Aasif Sheikh

SEMI-FINAL, TU CRICKET GROUND

TOSS: BAHRAIN, BAT FIRST.

Bahrain 106-9

Imran Ali 30 (23), Ahmer Bin Nisar 26* (25); Aqib Ilyas 4-1-10-4

Oman 109-0

Kashyap Prajapati 57* (44), Pratik Athavale 50* (42)

Oman win by 10 wickets.

Player of the match: Aqib Ilyas

FINAL

Nepal **vs** Oman

Sunday, 11:00 NST , TU Cricket Ground

NEPAL AT T20 WORLD CUP

South Africa 2007	Not eligible
England 2009	Not eligible
West Indies 2010	Not eligible
Sri Lanka 2012	Did not qualify
Bangladesh 2014	Group Stage
India 2016	Did not qualify
UAE/Oman 2021	Did not qualify
Australia 2022	Did not qualify
West Indies/United States 2024	Qualified

NEPAL AT T20 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Ireland 2008	Did not participate
UAE 2010	Did not participate
UAE 2012	Playoff Stage
UAE 2013	Qualified for the 2014 ICC World T20
Ireland/Scotland 2015	Group stage
UAE 2019	Did not qualify
Oman 2022	Semi-final (finish third to miss out on 2022 T20 World Cup)
Nepal 2023	Qualified for the 2024 T20 World Cup

Afghanistan boost World Cup semi-final bid

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LUCKNOW, NOV 3

Afghanistan swept past the Netherlands by seven wickets on Friday to boost their chances of reaching the World Cup semi-finals.

Chasing 180 to win, Afghanistan reached their target with 111 balls to spare to clinch a fourth win at the tournament to add to victories over defending champions England, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. They now have eight points, the same as Australia and New Zealand, who currently occupy two of the semi-final qualifying places.

Undefeated India have already made sure of a last-four spot with South Africa almost certain to join them.

Rahmat Shah hit his third successive half-century for Afghanistan while Hashmatullah made an undefeated 56, also his third fifty in a row.

Rahmat hit a 54-ball 52 with eight fours and shared a 74-run third wicket partnership with Hashmatullah after openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (10) and Ibrahim Zadran (20) had departed cheaply.

Rahmat fell, caught and bowled by Saqib Zulfiqar with 129 on the board and his team well set for victory. Hashmatullah's 56 came off 64 balls and followed his 80 against India and 58 in the match with Sri Lanka.

Afghanistan off-spinner Mohammad Nabi took 3-28.

Earlier, Afghanistan restricted Netherlands to 179 all out.

The Netherlands, who still harboured a slim hope of squeezing into the semi-finals, won the toss and opted to bat but were undone by seeing four of their batsmen run-out.

They recovered from seeing opener Wesley Barresi dismissed by spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman in the first over.

Max O'Dowd and Colin Ackermann put on 70 for the second wicket when a series of calamities put them on the back foot.

O'Dowd was on 42 when he was beaten by a direct hit by Azmatullah Omarzai from fine leg.

With the score on 92-2, Ackermann (29) failed to make his ground when Ikram Alikhil whipped off the bails from a smart throw by Rashid Khan.

On the next delivery, skipper Scott Edwards swept, lost sight of the ball and as he wandered aimlessly out of his crease Alikhil ran him out without scoring.

Nabi and teenage wrist spinner Noor Ahmad then sent back Bas de Leede and Saqib Zulfiqar with Logan van Beek dismissed thanks to a smart stumping by wicketkeeper Alikhil.

Sybrand Engelbrecht had made 58 with six fours when he became the fourth run-out of the innings, failing to beat Nabi's throw from midwicket.

That left the Dutch on 152-8 before they went on to be bowled out after 46.3 overs.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Today may bring out unreasonable and stubborn behaviours within yourself and others. Be mindful of how you address others, taking care to diffuse minor conflicts before they erupt into something larger, especially when dealing with temperamental companions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Avoid the temptation to oversleep no matter how much willpower it takes to pull yourself away from bed. Emotions intensify later tonight, and it may be difficult to maintain composure when faced with acts of unconditional love or unresolved grief.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)
Lean into your social side, feeling energised with each positive interaction you encounter. Give your mind freedom to explore later tonight, helping you swim through new depths of your intellectual, creative, and emotional subconscious if you're open to doing so.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
Move slowly, appreciate your surroundings, and find gratitude this morning. This could also open new doors toward prosperity, though you'll need to exude confidence when looking to improve your fortunes. Avoid the temptation to shop online later tonight.

LEO (July 23-August 22)
You'll want to watch out for tension at home for mood swings and unexpected upheaval. You'll also want to be mindful of how you communicate with others, taking care not to lash out with passive-aggressive or snappy quips.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)
Ask for signs or messages of encouragement from beyond the veil, keeping your eyes peeled for strange synchronicities. You may find yourself amid bizarre realisations, so try not to restrict your thinking. Lean into your spirituality for healing later tonight.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)
You'll be eager for connection, but be prepared to hear about plans being cancelled and unavailable companions. Consider reaching out to extended members of your social sphere if closer alliances can't meet up, mixing up your traditional Saturday hangs.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)
Unexpected drama could manifest within your love life, especially if the dynamic has felt a little stale recently. Rather than butting heads with your sweetie because you've hit a funk, try to experiment with new activities as a way to reconnect.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)
Try not to demand too much of yourself, opting instead to approach mistakes or messiness with love and grace. Connect with your body and spirituality through moving meditations later tonight, presenting an opportunity to invite divine healing into your physical form.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)
You won't have patience for people that demand more than they offer, inspiring you to take a break from anyone or anything that brings weight to your life. Allow yourself to unwind with a creative outlet or passion project later tonight.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)
Your weekend kicks off with a sweet start, putting you in the mood for connection. Move with an open heart, but remember to protect yourself from negative influences. Plan on laying low from home later tonight to find harmony within yourself.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)
You may find yourself trying to do too much at once, which could lead to a plethora of unfinished projects and many small messes. Avoid clutter by drafting a to-do list, avoiding distractions no matter how tempting they may be.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Used to be
4 Nun's outfit
9 Dancer — Astaire
13 Suggestion
14 One of the Muses
15 Entice
16 Province in Can.
17 Ricochet
18 "— Karenina"
19 Heft
21 Maltreated
23 Get exactly right
25 Lay — — the line
26 Amount due
29 Losing feathers
33 Flip over
34 Played for stakes
36 Fabrication
37 Lens option for eyeglasses
38 Dossiers
39 Homer Simpson's mom
40 Just a bit
41 House in the woods
42 Deep-water explorer
43 Tangle
45 Table setting items
47 Arch
48 At any time
49 Composer — Lloyd Webber
52 Ran off to wed
56 Rich soil
57 Fudd of cartoons
61 Island near Java
62 Singer — Turner
63 Tilts
64 Oklahoma city
65 Spoken
66 Mistake
67 Compass heading

DOWN
1 Trickery
2 Against
3 Not moving
4 Feverishly chaotic
5 Football's — Parseghian
6 Block
7 "Who am — — judge?"
8 Fruits sometimes stewed
9 Show with pride
10 Operates
11 River in Ireland
12 "— Man Walking"
13 Hem and —
20 Full house, e.g.
22 Daring
24 Easily read
25 Very large
26 Flat-topped hill
27 Of bees
28 Furnishes
30 "— — a Rainy Night"
31 SF player, for short
32 Toothed wheels
35 — Baba
38 Goodbye
39 Bacteria
41 Coop
42 Armed conflict about honor
44 Usual
46 Disinclined
49 Palo —
50 Film —
51 Comedian — Carvey
53 Gives a bad review
54 Peace Nobelist Wiesel
55 "— it!"
58 Pasture
59 Weather chart
60 USN officer

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

S	H	A	M			O	P	S			P	R	I	M
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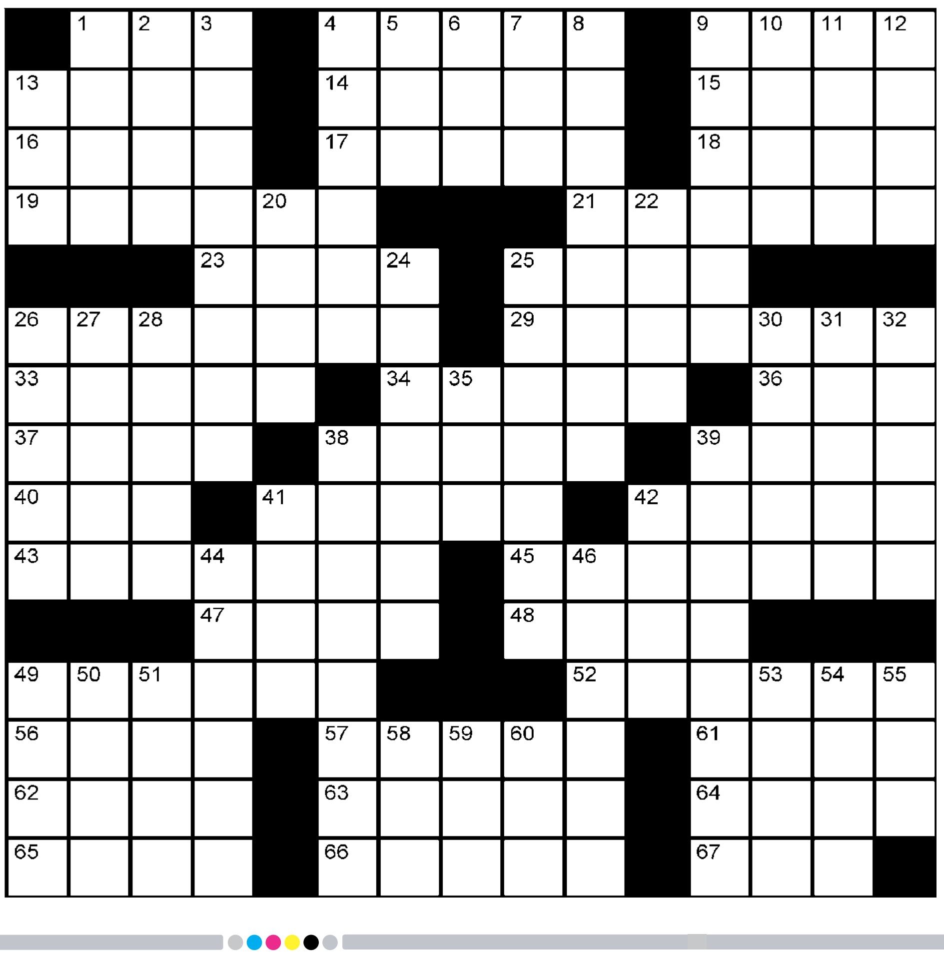

SUDOKU

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7	6	4	5	2	3	9	1	8
5	3	8	6	1	9	7	2	4
9	5	7	4	6	8	2	3	1
8	2	3	7	5	1	6	4	9
4	1	6	3	9	2	5	8	7

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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No.SC5101 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Exploring the complexities of life

Through eloquent prose, Subas KC challenges readers to contemplate the essential aspects of life.

MICHAEL SIDDHI

Impressions and Expressions' by Professor Subas KC offers a glimpse into his life through memoirs, personal stories, introspection and thoughts on contemporary issues. The book, divided into nine chapters, covers topics such as leadership, education, social issues, political development, gender and more.

Through his unique lens, KC shares insights gained from his four decades of academic experience. While reading, you'll find enrichment and inspiration, making it a valuable read for knowledge seekers, leaders, management experts and students alike. KC's perspective, though open to agreement or disagreement, is undeniably thought-provoking. This book isn't just a classroom experience; it's a collection of wisdom that can positively impact your life.

BOOK REVIEW

The central theme of this book revolves around knowledge and the process of acquiring it, virtuous and humble living, principles and integrity, social order and self-progression. KC's narratives are reflective, enlightening, and thought-provoking, fitting seamlessly into our lives.

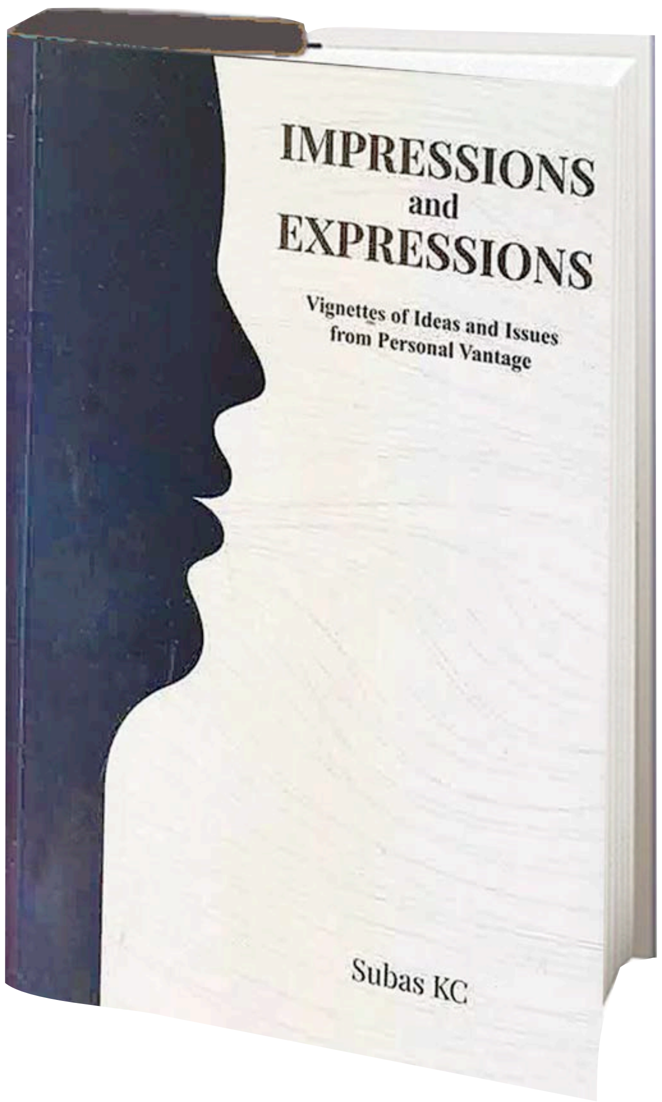
For example, his insights on education encouraged me to embark on a journey of self-discovery. According to KC, 'true education' involves discovering ourselves as both a process and a goal. It signifies a genuine desire for learning and self-discovery. Anything less, he asserts, is a deviation. This perspective, which I grasped after almost 50 years, resonated with me and affirmed my beliefs.

In terms of self-development, KC emphasises the importance of unblocking emotional or intellectual barriers that hinder progress. While this concept might seem commonplace, it was a revelation for me. According to him, 'everyone' should find their unique ways to break these barriers and engage in self-development.

Acknowledging and accepting these obstacles is neither easy nor pleasant. Education serves the purpose of preparing us not just for the future but also for the realities of life. Few grasp this as well as polymath KC, who jokingly refers to himself as a 'knowledge banker'. He highlights a significant aspect missing in our formal education system: true maturity isn't about being loud but appreciating the small things. In his chapter, 'Lesser Leaders & Larger Leaders', he imparts a profound lesson: a leader's failure doesn't equate to the failure of leadership. This vital lesson isn't typically found in our academic curricula.

KC doesn't dictate; instead, he suggests, leaving room for readers to draw their own conclusions. For instance, in the chapter 'Social Overarches', he points out that societal pressures and dysfunctional social norms shouldn't dictate our internal happiness. However, he refrains from defining these pressures or happiness, leaving readers to form their own judgments and conclusions.

I appreciate KC's choice of words and metaphors in expressing his ideas. His book is filled with clear, detailed, and comprehensive narratives. For instance, he eloquently highlights the lack of vision in our leaders with phrases like: "Long-term perspective, vision, and dreams of substantial change benefiting a larger community rarely guide their leadership journey." Another insightful expression he uses is, "At twilight, life is not the same as before," capturing the idea that life evolves, creating new conditions that shape and reshape its meaning. Not everyone grasps and accepts this truth.



IMPRESSIONS & EXPRESSIONS
Author: Subas KC
Year: 2022
Publisher: Shabdayatra Prakashan

'Impressions & Expressions' is a thought-provoking book that challenges readers to ponder various aspects of life. In the chapter 'Gender Equality–Not Possible?', KC suggests that gender equality is a spectrum, and achieving perfect and lasting equality might be challenging, given its evolving nature. This notion led me to contemplate whether the idea of a perfect human being or a perfect society is also evolving, rather than a fixed goal to pursue.

KC's perspective on contemporary issues prompts readers to reflect on our current position and the direction we're heading in as individuals, society and a nation. His statement, "It is too early for a new political party but too late for a social movement," highlights the need for societal change beyond political realms. He discusses the failure of political leaders and the resulting lack of role models. According to him, social change starts from the top of the social hierarchy. Additionally, he criticises business leaders for their narrow attitudes, exploitation of weak political structures, and unethical business practices. Although KC, as a management guru, briefly touches upon corporate matters, I wished for more in-depth insights in this area.

On the other hand, this book is written from KC's perspective, aimed at intellectuals and well-read individuals. However, not everyone can easily grasp KC's scholarly reasoning, which delves into ethical issues, social contradictions, academic practices in the context of contemporary life, and complex concepts such as psychic death and social overarches.

In the chapter titled 'Of Ironies', readers catch a glimpse of life's ironies through the author's eyes. Although KC has a clear understanding of these ironies and their various types, he struggles to convey these images effectively to the readers. Providing a few examples of ironies would have made these concepts more accessible to ordinary readers.

With its 275 pages of rich English and thought-provoking lessons, 'Impressions & Expressions' is not a light read. It demands effort, cognitive skills, a strong command of language, semantic precision and sophistication. In cognitive science, the term 'high-level knowledge' refers to abstract concepts learned through experience and education. KC's self-introspection reaches this level, making the book intellectually challenging.

I always grappled with questions about leadership, death, knowledge, humility, and humanism. It feels satisfying to explore these issues through KC's wise perspective. In today's materialistic world, where principles often take a back seat to appearances, I believe everyone must read this book and grasp the essence of living sincerely. Confucius wisely said, "We all have two lives; the second one starts when you realise you only have one." My own struggle began at fifty when I faced the harsh truth that I only had one life. Professor KC refers to this moment as a turning point and states, "You age when you find yourself on the sideline of the dominant social stream; when you see what others do not see and won't see, while you see too deep and too much." In 'Impressions & Expressions', I found some answers to my questions and gained a better understanding of my own turning point.

Siddhi is the head of transaction banking at Standard Chartered Bank Nepal.

EVENTS

LACM Carnival 2023

Little Angels' College of Management is organising a carnival where a lineup of bands, including Monkey Temple, ROCKHEADS, Pahelo Batti Muni, Pariwartan, KTA HARU, and artists like Purna Rai & Daju Bhai are set to perform.

Where: Little Angels' College, Hattiban, Lalitpur
When: November 4
Time: 9:00 am onwards
Entry: Rs300

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LACM CARNIVAL/FACEBOOK

PHOTO: COURTESY OF OHAYO SUSHI/FACEBOOK

Sushi Workshop

If you love having sushi, then gear up. Ohayo Sushi is organising a free sushi workshop. The two-day event will be led by the winner of the Washoku World Challenge, Chef Basanta Rai. The link for registration is available on its social media accounts.

Where: Ohayo Sushi, New Baneshwar, Kathmandu
When: November 4 and 5
Time: 10:00 am to 6:45 pm
Participation: Free

Octave Bazaar

Octave Kathmandu is organising a bazaar today. Visitors can browse through fashion, arts and handicrafts stalls at the event. A previous edition of this event was the Octave Fashion Bazaar.

Where: Octave Kathmandu, Durbarmarg, Kathmandu
When: November 4
Time: 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Entry: Free

PHOTO: COURTESY OF OCTAVE KATHMANDU

PHOTO: COURTESY OF OPEN MIC NEPAL

Axix At Uptown

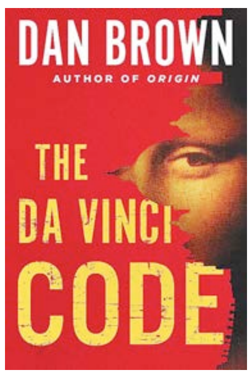
The Axix band is taking the stage at Uptown Lounge located in Jhamsikhel on Saturday. The band is set to perform their beloved songs, including 'Mero Prem', 'Adhuro Prem' and 'Muskan'.

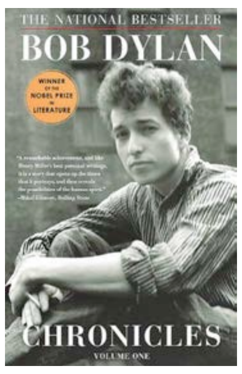
Where: Uptown Lounge, Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur
When: November 4
Time: 8:00 pm onwards
Entry: Rs1,500

BEST-SELLERS | NEW RELEASES

Fiction

1. The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown
2. The Mysterious Affair at Styles by Agatha Christie
3. Karnali Blues by Buddhisagar
4. The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho
5. The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

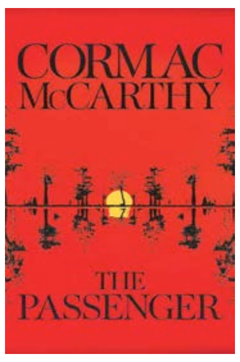




Non-Fiction

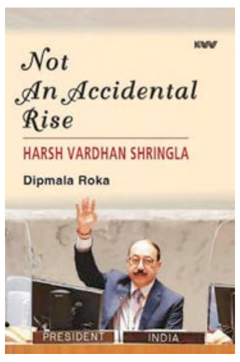
1. Chronicles: Volume One by Bob Dylan
2. Beyond The Story by Myeongseok Kang
3. Spare by Prince Harry
4. The Light We Carry by Michelle Obama
5. Not That Kind of Girl by Lena Dunham

Ekta Books



The Passenger
Author: Cormac McCarthy
Price: Rs1,200
Publisher: Picador

Cormac McCarthy, known for his iconic westerns, delivers a remarkable departure in 'The Passenger'. This mystifying page-turner follows Bobby Western, a rescue diver tangled in a Kafkaesque nightmare. As Bobby navigates a hazardous path of missing bodies, shadowy government agents, and a surreal twist on bureaucracy, McCarthy's signature style shines. The novel's heart lies in Bobby's emotional turmoil, marked by the loss of his schizophrenic sister. This book offers a complex narrative, blurring the lines between reality and illusion, delving into America's past, exploring the legacy of the atomic bomb and the burden of intergenerational guilt. While the novel's depth can be intense, it remains a masterful page-turner.



Not An Accidental Rise: Harsh Vardhan Shringla
Author: Dipmala Roka
Price: Rs1,568
Publisher: KW Publishers

'Not an Accidental Rise' by Dipmala Roka is an inspiring biography of Harsh Vardhan Shringla, a distinguished diplomat. This book beautifully portrays Shringla's incredible journey to the pinnacle of the Indian Foreign Service, driven by his unwavering determination and commitment. Roka skillfully intertwines Shringla's personal and diplomatic sides, showcasing his leadership qualities and strong work ethic from a young age. From his diverse upbringing to his exceptional civil service career, the book illuminates Shringla's dedication to serving his nation.

The Wicked Remain
Author: Laura Pohl
Price: Rs1,040
Publisher: Sourcebooks Fire

In 'The Wicked Remain', Laura Pohl delivers a captivating dive into the dark world of Grimrose Académie. This second installment in the Grimrose Girls series unravels the mysteries behind the fairy-tale deaths that haunt its students. Nani, Yuki, Ella, and Rory face their own secrets and supernatural powers as they strive to break the cycle of doomed fates. The series offers a fresh take on fairy-tale retellings, making it a hidden gem in the world of young adult queer dark fantasy. A gripping story with well-crafted characters, perfect for fans of dark fairy tales.

The aftermath of destruction in Nir Oz kibbutz in Israel. Hamas killed 100 people from 400 families there.

Zooming in on ground zero

We were asked to visit Alumim kibbutz, the site where Nepalis have been killed. However, finding a way there was challenging. The Nepali Embassy advised against us going, given the circumstances.

TEXT & PHOTOS: PRAKASH CHANDRA TIMILSENA

THROUGH my lens

The ongoing Israel-Gaza war has killed thousands and injured even more individuals. Just as the war began, we immediately heard about the tragic deaths of ten Nepalis in the attack launched by the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Israel on October 7.

On October 9, I was tasked to report the incident from Israel. Despite the risks, I accepted the assignment, believing it was crucial to cover this war.

The visa process started on October 10, and I received my visa on October 12. We were to depart the next day. When I returned home that night, I wrestled with how to tell my family. After packing, I broke the news to my wife: "I am going to Israel to report the war." She didn't say anything. A heavy silence hung between us. We were both aware of the dangers the mission presented. I wasn't even sure if I would return alive. But I had already taken on the task, and I was leaving the next day.

Fellow journalists Hom Karki from Kantipur and Shyam Shrestha from Kantipur TV were also travelling to Israel to report the war. Our flight took off on the afternoon of October 13. Boarding the plane weighed heavily on our hearts. During immigration, we were asked to fill out a form stating, "I will be responsible for whatever happens."

We landed at Tel Aviv-Yafo, Ben Gurion International Airport on October 14. The airport was eerily quiet. As we travelled from the airport to the hotel in a taxi, we noticed only police and emergency vehicles; the streets were almost deserted, with occasional private cars passing by. Halfway to our destination, a siren blared, prompting our taxi driver and others to seek shelter. The fear of an imminent bomb strike gripped us. With hearts pounding, we huddled near a wall until the sirens ceased.

Upon reaching the hotel, we felt a sense of relief, but that was short-lived. Just a moment later, sirens started ringing again, indicating another bomb attack. Tanka Timilsina, a Nepali staff at the hotel, suggested we enter the bunker and stay there for the next 90 seconds. He also suggested we do the same every time we hear the sirens.

Safety is the top priority of reporters covering a war. Finding bulletproof jackets and helmets in Nepal proved difficult due to long transits and limited market options. We began looking for them in Israel and, fortunately, found them there. The locals revealed that the demand for such gear had surged in the past few weeks due to the ongoing conflict.

We also found out that journalists had to follow certain technicalities to report the war. The most important of these was acquiring a press pass from the Government Press Office (GPO). By October 17, we had obtained the necessary credentials.

We were asked to visit Alumim kibbutz, the site where Nepalis have been killed. Kibbutz are communities in Israel, traditionally based on agriculture. However, finding a way there was challenging. The Nepali Embassy advised against us going, given the circumstances. My friend Jit Tamang who I had been in contact with via Facebook provided me with the contact of an Israeli friend, Maor Varnik, in case of emergencies. After explaining our situation to Maor, he connected us with Yoram Azrad, a taxi driver. Finding the right person to travel with was crucial for us, and Yoram became our lifeline during the next two days.

He picked us up from the hotel on October 18. The roads were congested due to US President Joe Biden's visit. We reached Shuva, which is located near Netivot city, close to the kibbutz and Gaza. Here, we observed (and photographed) Israeli soldiers at close quarters. These soldiers often took breaks at Shuva, where they rested, ate, and groomed themselves. This location also served as a refuge for those, including Nepalis, injured in the Hamas attack on October 7.

We requested the Israeli army to take us to the site where Nepalis were killed by Hamas militants, but they deemed it too dangerous for us to go. Despite numerous attempts, we were unable to access it. We could see the smoke rising from the bombs dropped by Israel in Gaza. Unsuccessful with our mission, we returned to our hotel in Tel Aviv in the evening.

The next morning, Yoram arrived at the hotel, and we set out again. We were going to the funeral for the four Nepalis killed by Hamas, organised by the Israeli government representative and the Nepali ambassador. As the coffins bearing the bodies were brought out, a wave of emotion washed over me. I couldn't help but think that our fate could be similar.

We then made our way to Nir Oz, another kibbutz where the Israeli army was stationed. The journey led us down a deserted road, surrounded only by military vehicles. Upon reaching the Army junction, we found ourselves amid hundreds of international journalists gathered to report the war. This was, by far, the biggest gathering of journalists I had ever seen.

Just as we arrived, the army commander briefed us about our surroundings, cautioning against touching anything. He guided us to the first house in the settlement, where a tragic incident had occurred. Hamas had set fire to a house, leading to the deaths of a grandmother and her granddaughter.

After the briefing, I, along with other photojournalists, cautiously entered the settlement. The scene was grim; it appeared that the residents had been killed brutally. Most houses were burnt, and the remaining ones were vandalised. Children's toys were scattered on the floor, adding to the heart-wrenching atmosphere. We could also hear the distant sounds of bombs dropped by Israel in Gaza.

We prepared to return to Nepal on October 20, but a sense of dread and unease followed us as we reached Ben Gurion International Airport. We arrived in Nepal on October 21. Even now, the sound of ambulance sirens terrifies me, reminding me of my time in Israel. Sadly, as of November 2, 35 journalists have lost their lives in the Israel-Gaza war.

Timilsena posts at @prakashtimilsen on X.

Happy memories on the wall inside an abandoned house in Nir Oz.

A flower vase is seen lying in debris in one of the homes in the kibbutz.

Israeli Army deployed at Shuva, near the Israel-Gaza border.

A burned down home in Nir Oz kibbutz.

Belongings left behind by the residents of the kibbutz.

Smoke coming out of Gaza as seen from Nir Oz kibbutz, which is 2 kilometres from the Israel-Gaza border.

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